

with responsibility. This focus on teamwork and this commitment to helping others explain Brett's desire to become a marine, and also explains what kind of marine he became.

Brett's funeral was on the football field at East Clinton High School, and over 1,000 mourners attended to salute the young marine. Rev. Carey Hilterbran, who had known Brett since he was a boy, assured the crowd that it was not a day for sorrow—Brett had died living his dream. “[Brett] wasn't afraid,” he said. “He had a good mindset, and he knew what he wanted to do.” While Reverend Hilterbran was speaking, the members of the Astros football team—wearing their red and white jerseys—stood silently at attention.

Schuyler Streber was one of Brett's football teammates. In his words, the world is going to be a lesser place without Brett Wightman in it. Standing on the East Clinton football field, Schuyler said that “sometimes you want to laugh because of some of the things we did out here together, and [sometimes] you want to cry because of the more emotional times. And to think I'm here right now and he's not—that's something that's hard to face. . . . We'll all miss him very much.”

Duane Richard is a young artist who did not personally know Brett Wightman. But he was so moved by the young Marine's sacrifice that he painted a 30-foot-wide mural of Brett on the side of Duane's parents' barn. He lined the image with 13 American flags—one for each of the Lima Marines killed during the roadside bombing. The barn is along Snow Hill road in Sabina, and people stop everyday to gaze at the mural and take pictures.

The artwork reflects Brett's honor and courage, as well as the great respect that his fellow Americans have for his sacrifice. In Duane's words, Brett was a “true American hero.”

Brett Wightman put his life on the line to preserve the freedoms that we Americans hold dear. He cherished hometown values and the importance of helping those around him. His family and friends will never forget him. “Brett will never be in the past,” as his mother Pam so beautifully said.

Indeed, Brett will never be forgotten. My wife, Fran, and I continue to keep Brett and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, those were three of the most beautiful tributes I have heard any of our colleagues give about the men and women who have died in service to this country. It was truly a testament to the strength of the Senator from Ohio, his caring and compassion for the people of Ohio that he and his team would take the time to compile such beautiful memories of these three young men and to share them with us in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as he did. I thank him for those beautiful tributes.

ROYALTY RELIEF

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to speak about amendment No. 5189 that is pending to the Agriculture Appropriations bill.

According to the unanimous consent agreement entered into a few moments ago, when we return in December we will take up an amendment by Senator CONRAD and I will have time after that amendment to speak again about this issue. It is an issue that I believe we have an opportunity to resolve before this Congress comes to an end. According to the schedule we are operating under, we only have a few more weeks to get our work done. There is a great deal of work that has to be done and a few things that can in fact be done on a bipartisan basis. This is one of them.

Both leaders have expressed their commitment to helping the Senate resolve the issue of expanded offshore drilling so we can provide more oil and gas for a country that is running short.

Four States—Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama, America's energy coast—have been proudly hosting this industry for over 60 years. We have contributed literally billions of barrels of oil, trillions of cubic feet of gas, and much money from the royalties paid has gone to the Treasury. But this is a problem we have to solve. It goes back to the 1998–1999 lease arrangements entered into by Minerals Management. This has been widely reported. It has also been the subject of several hearings in the Senate and the House.

Very simply, the Department made a series of mistakes. Those mistakes are being looked at to determine how and when and under what circumstances. But the fact is, although all the facts are not out yet, we do know that a serious mistake was made. When these contracts were entered into, there was no price threshold in them. When my predecessor Bennett Johnston wrote the Royalty Relief Act, which he did with some of his colleagues, it was always intended to be an incentive if the price of oil was low. At the time the bill was written, the price of oil was \$17 a barrel. We wish that were true today. But it was true back in the early to mid-1980s, when this bill was written.

As the process went on and these leases were entered into, the price threshold was left out. So now the price of oil is \$70 a barrel, or it has been recently, and what happened was, because the thresholds were not in there, the companies didn't have to pay royalties. The bottom line is, we have lost to date \$1.3 billion. It is estimated that we could lose as much as \$10 to \$12 billion; that is, the Federal Treasury.

My amendment has already been filed. If the Senate agrees to the amendment, it will fix that situation without violating contracts. We have established a way for Minerals Management to basically renegotiate the contracts. The taxpayers could then recover that money, and a portion of the money would then be used for the coastal restoration efforts so des-

perately needed in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in the next few years. If this amendment is passed, coupled with the bill we have already passed, we will have some immediate funding to begin the project of saving our wetlands and securing the energy infrastructure that is a tremendous asset to the Nation. This isn't just about helping Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama. This is about protecting a great coastal wetland that came under tremendous challenge with Katrina and Rita and will come under challenges again. We most certainly can recover this money, \$11 billion, that does belong to the taxpayer. It was a mistake, a very bad mistake that was made. We can recover some of that money and most of it can go to deficit reduction. If anyone hasn't noticed lately, we have quite a deficit to tackle. Some of this money could go to deficit reduction, and some of it could go to the States under a program already authorized, already supported in a bipartisan way, already in the law, called the OCS Program where this money would be directed.

I thank my colleagues for allowing me to speak tonight. I have filed the amendment so Members could consider it on our break through the holiday and come back and try to restore this money to the Treasury, help take the deficit down, and let's get started saving these wetlands and protecting the coast which is so vital to the economic future of the Nation.

I thank my colleagues for their patience.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Louisiana. I hope the people of her home State are watching carefully. Senator LANDRIEU, even before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, worked very hard for her State. But since then, it has been nonstop. She is not the only one. There are many elected officials who are doing everything they can to help the families and businesses and others who were devastated. But I commend her to be here so late at night speaking up for her State again. I hope she is successful with her amendment which would bring resources to her State that are badly needed as post-Katrina construction continues.

SENATOR MIKE DeWINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a few moments ago, our colleague from the State of Ohio, Senator MIKE DeWINE, gave tribute to three Ohioans who lost their lives in Iraq. I listened to these carefully and I hope others did as well. They were beautiful life stories, beautifully written, beautifully spoken by